NFB

National Federation of the Blind

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

1983 – 2008

REMEMBER THE PAST, *IMAGINE* THE FUTURE

HV1788 .N43 2008

Dear Families and Friends of Blind Children,

How does one imagine the unimaginable?

I do not believe I exaggerate when I say that we reached a turning point in the history of the blind twenty-five years ago on July 2, 1983, in Kansas City, Missouri, when parents of blind children made common cause with the organized blind and brought into being what would ultimately be known as the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, a division of the National Federation of the Blind—the NOPBC.

From the beginning the goals were bold and imaginative, the structure and premise new, fresh, and unique. Never before (so far as I know) had a national parents organization of blind children (or children with any other disability, for that matter) chosen to be guided and mentored by an adult organization of the same disability. Our affiliation was not to be a matter of lifeless words on paper, but a living, breathing, growing, and changing relationship—parents and their blind children interacting and partnering with blind adults.

On that day we made the commitment to imagine together with the members of the National Federation of the Blind a society in which our children would be accepted as normal—with all the rights and responsibilities that this implies—and given the same opportunities as all other children to achieve their potential and pursue their dreams.

As individual families and as an organization, we hitched our wagon to the star of the National Federation of the Blind, and that decision has made all the difference in the lives of thousands of blind children—some of whom are now young adults. Now, after twenty-five years, it is time to pause, take stock, reflect, draw inspiration from our past successes, and consider what we might imagine for the future.

Barbara Cheadle
President, NOPBC

NFB
National Federation of the Blind

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

About NOPBC

What is the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children?

Founded in 1983, the NOPBC is a national membership organization of parents and friends of blind children reaching out to each other to give vital support, encouragement, and information. We have over 3,000 members in all 50 states and divisions or parent contacts in about 30 states plus Puerto Rico.

What is different about the NOPBC?

Our status as a division of the National Federation of the Blind, the largest and most influential organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. Our members are well informed about the technological, legislative, and societal issues that affect blind people. We also enjoy the resources, support, and expertise of 50,000 blind people who can serve as mentors and role models for our children. And finally, as our children grow up, they too have the Federation to belong to.

What is the mission of the NOPBC?

The purpose of the NOPBC is to:

- create a climate of opportunity for blind children in home and society.
- provide information and support to parents of blind children.
- facilitate the sharing of experience and concerns among parents of blind children.
- develop and expand resources available to parents and their children.
- help parents of blind children gain understanding and perspective through partnership and contact with blind adults.
- function as an integral part of the NFB in its ongoing effort to achieve equality and opportunity for all blind persons.

In the beginning...The NFB Parental Concerns Committee published the first issue of the NFB Newsletter for Parents of Blind Children in 1981; 368 copies were printed and circulated. In 1982 the parental concerns committee sponsored the first national parents seminar at the NFB convention; Dottie Neeley, MO, won the contest to name the newsletter, and it became *Future Reflections*; the NFB offered the first kid-sized canes.

1983	The Parents of Blind Children Division of the National Federation of the Blind (POBC, later to be renamed NOPBC) is established on July 2 at the NFB Convention in Kansas City, MO. Susan Ford is elected president. Our first program is established: the distribution of the NE Services for the Visually Impaired video, *Kids with Canes*, Doris Willoughby, coordinator.
1984	POBC votes to hold an annual seminar at all future NFB national conventions. POBC brochures are printed and circulated. 14 NFB state affiliates conduct parent seminars or other activities for parents. The Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest is established. The Slate Mates (now Slate Pals) pen-pal program is established, Fred Schroeder, coordinator.
1985	Adoption and Blindness network established.
1986	Barbara Cheadle elected POBC president. 22 states conduct parent seminars or other activities for parents.
1987	President Cheadle is appointed as consultant to the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) regarding library services for children. After much campaigning by POBC, NLS hires its first children's librarian. POBC parents in Minnesota help to pass the first Braille bill. First national IEP Workshop is held at the national convention. Children's activity program with blind mentors at the convention is established. Debbie Hamm, POBC secretary, becomes the first POBC parent to address the NFB convention. Eight states establish POBC divisions. Committee on blind multiply handicapped children established. 28 Slate Pals are matched.
1988	President Cheadle and 2nd VP Ruby Ryles address the NFB convention. The first parent leadership seminar is held at NFB headquarters in Baltimore. The Distinguished Educator of Blind Children Award is established.

1989	*Handbook for Itinerant and Resource Teachers of Blind and Visually Impaired Students* by Doris Willoughby and Sharon Duffy is released. 13 POBC state divisions give reports at the national annual meeting. 143 students participate in the Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest. Victory for Braille literacy: John and Barbara Cheadle win Braille for Chaz in due process hearing.
1990	7,807 subscribers receive *Future Reflections*.
1991	POBC has 15 active committees including adoption, education, home schooling, legislation, library services, multiple disabilities, and technology.
1992	In response to NOPBC growth, the national board expands by two members. Two-day regional conference encompassing five states is held. The first national Braille workshop for parents is held at convention in partnership with NLS, Claudell Stocker, head of the NLS Braille Development Section, instructor.
1993	First legislative seminar for parents conducted at the NFB Washington, D.C. Seminar.
1994	Name is changed from POBC to National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC), a division of the National Federation of the Blind. Barbara Cheadle participates in the technical standards focus group convened by the US Dept. of Ed., Office of Civil Rights. Cane Walk is established at national convention by Joe Cutter. 16 states have POBC divisions. 25 states have passed Braille literacy legislation.
	Debbie Stein becomes Slate Pals coordinator.
1995	Letter-writing campaign to Congress in support of a Braille literacy provision in the IDEA generates more than 1,510 documented letters. Six new POBC divisions organized in the states. First youth activities sponsored by NOPBC held at convention and at the NFB headquarters in Baltimore.
1996	The US House of Representatives includes a Braille literacy provision in its IDEA bill; the Senate does not; NOPBC continues its letter-writing campaign. Our first video, *It's OK to Be Blind,* edited by Myra Lesser, is launched.

1997	NOPBC's letter campaign yields success: a Braille literacy provision is included in the reauthorization of IDEA. NOPBC publishes *The Bridge to Braille: Reading and School Success for the Young Blind Child,* by Carol Castellano and Dawn Kosman. *White Canes for Blind Kids* video is launched, Myra Lesser, editor. 255 students read 274,000 pages for the Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest. Teen Drop-In Room (later renamed the Teen Hospitality Room) is established at national convention. The first regional leadership retreat for parents is held at the NFB of South Carolina's Rocky Bottom camp.
1998	Dr. Ruby Ryles steps down as 1st VP to take on a new role as director of the new master's degree program in O&M at Louisiana Tech, created in collaboration with the Louisiana Center for the Blind.
	Our six-video set, *Avoiding an IEP Disaster*, Myra Lesser, editor, is released.
1999	Dr. Lilli Nielsen, creator of Active Learning, is NOPBC guest speaker and workshop presenter at her first NFB convention. The first Kenneth Jernigan Braille Carnival is held at convention. The blindkid listserv is established. First In-Touch Braille and Technology Seminar for parents is conducted in Baltimore.
2000	Mentoring program matching college students with blind teens at convention is established in partnership with the National Association of Blind Students (NABS). 26 states have POBC divisions. To keep up with growth, board is expanded again by two positions.
2001	Kid Talk with Dr. Marc Maurer is initiated at our annual seminar. 57 Slate Pals are matched.
2002	Barbara Cheadle represents NOPBC in the US Commission on Civil Rights briefing on IDEA. 449 students read 637,993 pages in the Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest; 28 schools for the blind participate.
2003	Braille Book Flea Market is established at convention with a UPS grant and the support of UPS volunteers. NOPBC partners in the launching and distribution of the first NASA tactile Braille book, *Touch the Universe.*

2004	After intense letter-writing campaign provisions for textbooks on time are added to the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA. Parent outreach programs are established at the new NFB Jernigan Institute. Braille Reading Pals pre-literacy program is launched. NOPBC accepts the invitation to participate on the Public Advisory Council for the National Center for Leadership in Visual Impairment (NCLVI).
2005	Barbara Cheadle is invited to be the keynote speaker at the North American Active Learning Convention. MN POBC president Carrie Gilmer addresses the NFB convention. *Making It Work: Educating the Blind/Visually Impaired Student in the Regular School* by Carol Castellano is launched at the NOPBC annual seminar. NOPBC co-sponsors the Beginnings and Blueprints early childhood conference in collaboration with the NFB Jernigan Institute.
2006	NOPBC writes the Pop-Up IEP for the National Center for Low Incidence Disabilities Web site. NOPBC develops the brochure, *Braille and the Visually Impaired Student: What Does the Law Require?* in partnership with the National Agenda. The Parent Leadership Program (PLP) is launched in partnership with the NFB Affiliate Action Department. NOPBC provides literature and kids canes to parents of blind children from overseas in collaboration with the Association for Retinopathy of Prematurity and Related Diseases (ROPARD).
2007	NOPBC distributes Doris Willoughby's *Handbook for Itinerant and Resource Teachers of Blind and VI Students* free to parents and teachers in the US, Canada, and the UK. NOPBC board is expanded by four; the total of members and officers on the board is now 15. Joe Cutter's first book, *Independent Movement and Travel in Blind Children,* is launched at the NOPBC annual conference. *Future Reflections* circulation reaches almost 16,000.
2008	NOPBC celebrates the first 25 years of leadership in expanding opportunities for blind children. History continues to be made.

NOPBC would like to thank the following sponsors whose generous contributions made this publication and the NOPBC 25th Anniversary Celebration possible.

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The Colorado Center for the Blind is proud to be a sponsor of the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. Our NFB roots are clearly intertwined. The NOPBC has educated parents and professionals about the possibilities for blind children, and the CCB, through its training programs, has helped make those possibilities come true. We celebrate your past and we walk hand-in-hand into the future. Congratulations!

CONGRATULATIONS

to the

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on

25 years of serving children who are blind and visually impaired.
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MEMORIES of the NOPBC

by Dawn Neddo, Michigan

I would like to wish the NOPBC a happy 25th anniversary and thank all the parents and NFB members who have helped me so much through the years with raising and advocating for my son, Kyle Neddo.

Kyle and I attended our first Michigan convention when he was three. I had been searching for answers to help me know how to raise this little boy that we adopted and dearly loved who was also blind, but everywhere I turned it seemed no one had any hope for his future. It was in the NFB and its membership that I found that hope and the skills to make sure he had every chance for a future the same way that my other five children would have. We went on to attend national conventions in Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, two in Kentucky, and hopefully more in the future. The NOPBC seminars gave me the opportunity to meet with other parents and learn from them, to laugh and compare our lives, to confirm that maybe we weren't the only crazy parent or the only parent from Hell that would dare to push for the right blindness skills for our children. I don't know what I would ever have done without the NFB/NOPBC in our life.

As the Twig Is Bent Award

"There is a well known saying that, as the twig is bent, so grows the tree. What is true of plants is also true of people." So said Dr. Jernigan in his introduction of the 1992 Kernel Book *As The Twig Is Bent*. At another time Dr. Jernigan also remarked that what is true for people is also true for organizations. As philosophies, programs, policies, relationships, and commitments are bent, so grows the organization.

With this theme as our guide, it is with great pleasure that the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children establishes in its 25th anniversary year the As the Twig Is Bent Award to be given annually as it is evident an individual has met its high standards. An individual must make contributions of such significance that the impact has been no less than to bend the future of the NOPBC and the lives of the blind children of the nation towards the full realization of their potentials.

In this our 25th year, we have chosen to reach back to our beginnings and honor those who planted the seeds and bent the twigs of the NOPBC and the lives of blind children and their parents. We are honoring 25 (plus one to grow on). As planters, tillers, mulchers, and pruners, each has had a hand in helping us become the full, healthy tree that the NOPBC is today, and each continues to have a hand in shaping our growth.

They dreamed of a better future for blind children. They planted and nurtured the seeds of faith, high expectations, and normalcy. They caused them to grow into a form that would bear robust branches and much fruit. Some of their labors have been well known and conspicuous. Much of their work has been out of view, performed with intensity and devotion but quietly, with no fanfare or recognition. Their labors have kept the tree growing through storms, flood, and drought. Through faith, belief, love, sheer will, and hard work, they never faltered in their devotion to bend the twigs.

The Twig Benders we honor in 2008 are:

Carol Castellano
Barbara Cheadle
John Cheadle
Joe Cutter
Susan Ford
Marty Greiser
Sandy Halverson
Allen Harris
Joy Harris
Julie Hunter
Nadine Jacobson
Kenneth Jernigan
Mary Ellen Jernigan
Denise Mackenstadt
Marc Maurer
Carla McQuillan
Abraham Nemeth
Barbara Pierce
Ruby Ryles
Fred Schroeder
Debbie Kent-Stein
Gail Wagner
Ramona Walhof
Loretta White
Doris Willoughby
Joanne Wilson

Awardee, Carol Castellano: Carol found the NFB when her daughter Serena was an infant and immediately adopted the Federation philosophy as her guide. We have no more prolific contributor to our literature about educating and raising blind children. Carol is the author of numerous *Future Reflections* articles and books. Her highly regarded books—*Bridge to Braille* and *Making It Work*—are considered must-reads for parents and educators alike. Under her dynamic and effective leadership as the president of the New Jersey POBC, she has built one of the largest, most active parent chapters in the nation. As first vice president of the NOPBC, Carol has developed innovative workshops and traversed the nation, speaking, mentoring, and encouraging parents and educators. She discovered Joe Cutter and introduced him

to the NFB, bending an entire branch with this single action. She continues to bend branches today with her involvement in the development of a new teachers of blind students training program at the College of New Jersey. She is a tireless worker who is, in her own words, "crazy for blind kids," and we are forever grateful for her craziness.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of New Jersey

The members of the NFB of New Jersey salute the work of the NOPBC. Parents, your work has brought us all closer to first-class citizenship, and we thank you for it. We especially commend Carol Castellano, NOPBC's first vice president, and one of New Jersey's own. Carol, your philosophy of high expectations guides us, your dedicated service inspires us, and your love and friendship are the gifts we treasure most of all. We are honored to serve beside you and privileged to call you friend.

Awardee, Barbara Cheadle: Barbara has been president of the NOPBC from 1986 to the present and editor of *Future Reflections* since its inception and distribution from her dining room table in 1981. The point at which Barbara's life intersected with the NFB was different from that of most parents of blind children. She was an active, committed member of the NFB before she was even a mother. Barbara and husband John Cheadle discovered the NFB in 1975 when she was a rehabilitation counselor and he was an orientation and mobility instructor with the Nebraska Services for the Visually Impaired. Five years later they adopted Charles—Chaz—from Korea. Adopted at age two, he was in the vanguard of blind children to grow up surrounded by Federation mentors and role models. No one individual has

done more than Barbara to shape the NOPBC as an organization, and thereby the literature, resources, and programs available to blind children and their parents. If Barbara did not create it, she has been the force behind it. The programs or projects she has managed for over 20 years include the annual parents' seminar, the development and distribution of videos to promote early cane use, the Braille Readers Are Leaders contest, Slate Pals (a pen-pal program for Braille readers), national IEP workshops; the Cane Walk, teen activities at convention (scavenger hunts, boy talk and girl talk, and teen hospitality room), In-Touch Braille and Technology seminars, parent leadership retreats, Braille programs to promote early literacy (Braille Pals), the Braille Book Flea Market, and blindkid, a listserv that enhances networking opportunities for parents throughout the country and the world. Barbara believes that her greatest strength in leadership has been to recognize and nurture the gifts and vision of others and to help those gifts and visions blossom and bear fruit. She is our architect and builder, groundbreaker and planter. So profound are her marks that they will be evident in the rings of the tree for all time.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of New Jersey
Parents of Blind Children Chapter

Congratulations and thanks so much to Barbara Cheadle and NOPBC for being there for the parents and children of NJ and the nation. –POBC-NJ

Barbara Cheadle gave me so much confidence that if I adopted this baby I would not be raising her alone. I would have the entire village of the Federation to help in raising this little girl to grow up to be a competent and confident blind woman. –Kathryn Aqua, Kentucky

You can search your 25 years of history and not find a couple more committed to parents and their blind children than Pat and Jerry Jones. From the moment I met them at a TN state convention during the early '90's, I have had nothing but respect and admiration for them. The Joneses are the grandparents of Amanda and April Jones, two bright and shining stars in the future of Tennessee's leadership. Their advocacy for their granddaughters as well as countless other families has become a tradition in our state. I am personally extremely grateful that they decided to answer the call to action for Tennessee's blind children and their families across the state. To Jerry and Pat Jones, the NFB of TN salutes you and we wish you Godspeed! Michael Seay, President NFB-TN

Awardee, John Cheadle: As husband of the president of the NOPBC, John has been an invaluable and wise sounding board and advisor. But he isn't just a first gentleman without his own expertise. John was a cane travel instructor at the Nebraska rehab agency when he and Barbara met and married in the mid seventies. He used Dr. Jernigan's Iowa program as a model to build the third true full-industrial-arts, confidence-building program for the blind in the nation. In 1980 John and Barbara adopted a beautiful two-year-old blind boy named Chaz. John decided there was no reason not to give Chaz a cane. So he, a parent, cut down an NFB cane, manufacturing the first toddler cane in history. A few years later the NFB was the first organization to manufacture and sell kid-size canes commercially. John's 1983 articles "On Driving Nails and Hitting the Mark with Attitudes" and "For Fathers (and Others): Some Tips on Alternative Techniques" are still used to educate reluctant industrial arts teachers.

MEMORIES of the NOPBC

by Anna (Cheadle) Hughes, England

I never had a sister; I had something altogether different. When I took my first steps in 1983, the NOPBC (or POBC as it was then) was taking its first steps also.

When I began to talk a year later, word of the POBC was spreading too. The first generation of Braille readers were on their way to being leaders. As soon as I was sturdy enough to lift heavy objects, I carried box after box of literature for parents to conference rooms around the country. Now I carry the information by word of mouth, most recently to the school I work at in the UK.

And now that I am grown, starting a family and a career, so are the first few generations of NOPBC kids. Those Braille readers are inheriting our world, and without the NOPBC the technological, legislative, and social issues they have faced could have proved insurmountable, and, worst of all, "self-advocacy" might still be a dirty word.

So here's a toast to my something-altogether-different sister, the one my mother, Barbara Cheadle, raised alongside me from first faltering steps to striding steps abroad: the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children. As we say in the UK, cheers!

Awardee, Joseph Cutter: Joe was already an innovative early childhood orientation and mobility instructor with normal expectations for the blind children he served when Carol Castellano introduced him to the NFB. In his words, "It became a natural marriage." In 1994 Joe was honored as winner of the Federation's Distinguished Educator of Blind Children Award, and shortly thereafter he collaborated with the NOPBC to establish the Cane Walk event at the convention. In 2006 Joe was once again honored as the recipient of the Fredric K. Schroeder Award for outstanding contributions to the field of travel training for the blind. No name is more synonymous with advances in knowledge about early independent movement and cane travel for blind children

(including those with multiple disabilities). His book, *Independent Movement and Travel in Blind Children: A Promotion Model*, which was launched at the 2007 NFB convention, was received as an immediate classic. Serving as a role model for other sighted instructors, he promoted instruction from the positive position of recognizing blind children's assets and rejected orientation and mobility practices that reflect negative attitudes and a blindness-as-deficit mentality. He has bent the branch of movement for blind children toward freedom, and the philosophy of the teaching profession toward the assumption of normalcy.

MEMORIES of the NOPBC

by Stephanie Kieszak-Holloway, Georgia

The NOPBC and NFB have touched our lives in so many ways that it's hard to mention just a few. The first thing that came to mind was the incredible support we received when we decided we wanted our 18-month-old daughter Kendra to have a white cane. The O&M professionals were strongly opposed to letting her have one, but, after reading the literature available from the NOPBC and talking to Joe Cutter, my husband and I knew we were making the right decision. Our daughter is now 5 years old and wouldn't dream of leaving the house without her cane.

Kendra is now enrolled in a public school pre-k program, where she is fully mainstreamed. She currently takes ballet/tap lessons and swim lessons. As parents we expect Kendra to live her life fully and not to let the prejudices of others keep her from achieving whatever she sets out to accomplish. We love all the role models available to Kendra through our association with the NFB, who show her through their actions that blind people can be whatever they want to be.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Wisconsin

The NFB of Wisconsin would like to congratulate the NOPBC for twenty-five successful years of empowering parents of blind children with the knowledge that blindness is not a tragedy; that, with the necessary skills, proper role-models, and strong advocacy by parents, blindness can be placed in its proper perspective. Congratulations on a job well done.

Awardee, Susan Ford: Blind herself and the mother of Brent Ford, her adopted blind son, Susan helped write the NOPBC constitution, was the first president of the NOPBC from 1983-1985, and was the first vice president for the following six years. She initiated the NOPBC Slate Pal program, a pen-pal service for Braille readers, and was a key leader in the establishment of the Braille Readers Are Leaders contest. From the beginning she put the focus on Braille literacy. She also set the stage for the white-canes-for-blind-kids revolution. Under her leadership the NOPBC acquired the right to distribute *Kids with Canes*, a video produced by Nebraska Rehabilitation Services for the Visually Impaired. In everything they did, Susan and her husband, the late John Ford, were blind role models and mentors for the sighted parents who came within the ever-widening circle of influence of the NOPBC. She has never tired in her devotion to bring parents and blind children into the NFB family through her activities within NOPBC and her state affiliates of Montana and Missouri.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Missouri

MEMORIES of the NOPBC

The NFB of Missouri

What words in the English language do more to encourage our optimism and hint at immortality than the future, our children, the destiny of our country, and the making of a better world? Twenty-five years ago in Missouri we thought about all of these things as we listened to a young mother of two ask if we would help her take on a special project, a newsletter to reach out to the mothers and fathers of blind children and give them hope in place of isolation and despair. We were a group primed for a noble cause, but it didn't hurt a bit that it was being championed by a wonderful little family whose every member came to have a special place in our hearts.

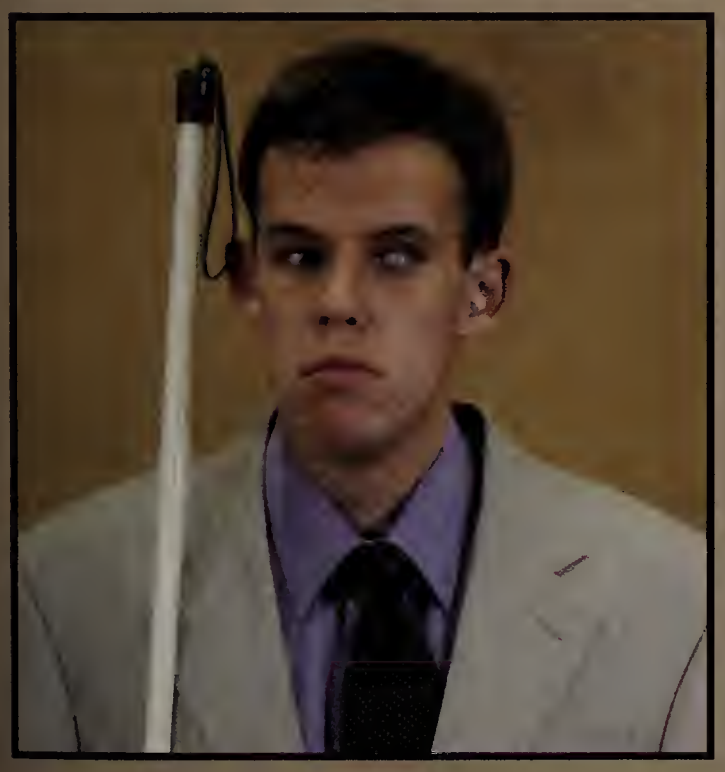
Our first task was to help with a mailing, which began by transferring various lists to a computer and then to labels. We boasted about our project and marveled at what a task had been undertaken when 368 newsletters were delivered to the post office. But Missouri was more than mailing labels--we were also inside the newsletter. Barbara Cheadle was the editor, and oh how proud that made us feel. If Mrs. Cheadle was the editor, that meant the editorial offices were housed in the state capitol of Missouri, and undoubtedly that counted for something and added to our pride.

Susan Ford had long been a primary parent advocate pressing for us to get our message out, and her name appeared in many of the articles, sometimes as their author and sometimes cited as the reason why parents dared to believe their children could grow up to be just like Susan. Mary Wurtzel was also an advisor and contributor to the newsletter, and she too brought living examples to show that, not only could sighted parents raise blind children, but blind parents could raise sighted youngsters who were smart, kind, honest, and well behaved.

Soon three-hundred plus labels weren't enough, then five-hundred didn't fill the bill, and before long we were talking about a publication that needed a name. So a contest was born, was advertised in this little newsletter without a name, and what do you know, the winning name came from Dottie Neely, who at the time lived in Missouri. The name captured in two words our hopes, our dreams, and our commitment to blind children. They would indeed be our future reflections; we would do everything we could to ensure they had a future bright with promise, and come what may, we and they would be forever linked by our dreams and their potential, our resources and their resourcefulness, our trust in the capabilities of blind people and their trust that we would keep our word and be with them every step of the way. The combination felt magical, weighty, and yet uplifting. The commitment was as serious and long-term as any we had ever made, but so too was what all of us would reap.

For a long time now much of the creative work and physical assembly of *Future Reflections* has taken place somewhere else, but that hasn't changed one little bit the way Missouri feels about this life-changing instrument and the part the show-me model played not only in the beginnings of the publication but in the results it continues to show in the lives of the thousands who have been touched by it. No magic bullet will change the world for blind people, but a messenger is cataloging all of the building blocks that help blind youngsters transition into happy and productive blind adults. We had a part; we are a part; and our pledge is as strong today as it was a quarter of a century ago. We will stand with parents of blind children when they need comfort and advice. We will be there when they need information to navigate the complex laws and regulations that determine what kind of education their daughters and sons receive, and we will be there for our children as colleagues, friends, and loved ones as they celebrate the milestones in growing up, the temporary setbacks that are an inseparable part, and their eventual arrival in a place where they are the providers, the school teachers, the community leaders, and the men and women who carry on this wonderful work of changing what it means to be blind.

Awardee, Martin Greiser: Marty attended his first NFB convention in 1989 when his blind son Cody was just two years old. As is true for many first-timers, Marty bought Cody his first cane at that convention. Cody is one of that first generation of children to get canes so young that they never remember a time when they did not have them. Marty joined the NOPBC board in 1991. Following two board terms, he served as secretary of the NOPBC for three terms and as second vice president for three terms for a total of 14 years of elected leadership. He developed a passion for promoting change through legislative efforts at the state and national levels within the NFB. He was the first NFB delegate from Montana to come to the Washington Seminar and was a key leader in promoting nationwide parent participation in this D.C. event. In the nineties Marty took the helm of organizing and conducting our IEP workshops at convention. His capacity to help parents navigate the rocky shoals of IEPs came from his own battles to gain an appropriate education for his son. Marty's compassionate, determined, tireless work has improved the lives of countless blind children and their parents. He continues to be active in the Montana NFB affiliate. His son Cody is also active in the NFB and was a national scholarship winner in 2007. To Marty we say, "Job well done; you have been a good and faithful servant."



NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Pennsylvania

The NFB of Pennsylvania applauds NOPBC's 25 years of work in helping parents prepare their blind children for life. We also applaud the untiring work of Mike Wolk in the Pennsylvania Parents of Blind Children. Mike and others provided the foundation upon which Pennsylvania parents continue to build. We will reap the harvest of the seeds they planted.

Best wishes to NOPBC on the 25th Anniversary. A huge thank you to this organization and the NFB for making our wonderful daughter Sofia's future even brighter. –Jurgen and Kristina Wittenstein, Germany

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Puerto Rico

Alpidio Rolón and the NFB of Puerto Rico say, "Thank you," to the Rivera family--Don Edwin, Doña Magdalena, Eileen, Mildred, and Caroline--for their unstinting work for blind children, and the blind in general.

Awardee, Sandy Halverson: Sandy has been a dedicated supporter of NOPBC and a mentor for parents and blind children in every state she has lived in since our beginning. She was president of the MD-POBC in its early years, and she is currently the appointed parent liaison for the NFB of Virginia and its parents division. Sandy's passion, however, has been Braille literacy. She has tutored and taught Braille to children across several states and applied her knowledge and talent to supporting our Braille Readers Are Leaders contest as a judge and volunteer. With true Federation dedication she managed the contest out of her own home for many years. She recalls receiving mailbags full of 300 plus entries on the front steps of her home. Those blind contestants are now

grown, and the fruit of her labor to get blind children and their parents to embrace Braille literacy is evident as many of these former contestants have gone on to become NFB scholarship winners and young leaders in the NFB. Her unyielding efforts, loving manner, and excellent example have brought countless families into the extended family of the NFB.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Virginia

The NFB-VA pays tribute to Sandy Halverson, who serves as the affiliate's liaison to our parents division. She mentors parents, helping them understand that their child's blindness is no tragedy, and she helps them gather the tools they need to navigate the special education system. As an advocate at Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, Sandy keeps the focus on each child's individual need and right to an appropriate education. She also organizes Braille carnivals at our annual state conventions. Since the inception of these carnivals, more parents with young blind children come Friday night for the fun and stay for the Saturday program. If you asked Sandy why she spends volunteer time organizing Braille carnivals and sifting through complex IEP cases, she will tell you, "It is the right thing to do." Sandy believes that the best place to begin changing attitudes about blindness is with youngsters and their parents. With Mrs. Halverson's efforts, Virginia's parents become their children's best advocates.

MEMORIES of the NOPBC

by Renee Bevan, Virginia

I met Barbara Cheadle when my son John was an infant. For 17 years I have had the comfort of knowing the resources and wisdom of NOPBC will be there for us. NOPBC has helped us set age-appropriate goals, get the services we need, and maintain a positive attitude about blindness; and it has given us the encouragement to have high expectations for John.

Once, when John was about five years old, my neighbor and her son, about four, took us to the airport for our trip to the NFB national convention. My neighbor's son told John that he was going to be a "blind dad." John insisted that he wasn't. He maintained that, when he was older, he'd be able to see. I could tell that he was terribly concerned about how he could be a good dad if he were blind. On about the third day of convention, John was playing in the pool with another boy his age. John just assumed that the boy was blind like himself, but something the boy said made John realize that his new friend was sighted. Like any glib five-year-old, John said, "Well, if you can see, why are you here?" The young man said, "I'm here with my dad, and he's blind." John scrambled over to talk to the dad about being a blind dad. The reassurances he was able to give John were the kind only a blind dad could give. This kind of direct interaction with blind adults is what has helped John to approach life with a very positive yet practical attitude.

John is now a junior in high school. He volunteers in our community, he is active in our church youth group, he is on the high school swim team, and he is in the high school marching and concert bands. He is a confident, happy young man with hopes and dreams and life goals just like any other 17-year-old high school boy. He rarely questions if he can do something. Rather, if he has a question, it is how he can do it.

Awardee, Allen Harris: Allen has been reaching out to parents and blind children since his earliest days of leadership within the NFB of Michigan more than 25 years ago. Big in physical size and big in raising his voice on behalf of his fellow blind, Allen has also been big in supporting parent efforts to organize in Michigan and most recently in Iowa. In Michigan Allen and his wife Joy introduced a revolutionary program called Saturday School. The program provided a way to get around bureaucratic barriers and reach blind children directly with NFB skill training, knowledge, and positive attitudes. Saturday School was a simple idea, but its impact has been profound. Allen and Joy took Saturday School with them to Iowa, and today more Saturday Schools or projects like it are being started by NFB and POBC affiliates across the country. Currently Allen serves as the director of the Iowa Department for the Blind and continues to initiate programs and policies that empower blind people to take control of their own lives.

Tributes from Allen Harris, Director, Iowa Department for the Blind:

Brunhilda Merk-Adam is the strongest and most effective advocate for parents and blind children with whom I have ever worked. We met in the early 90s when she, her son Karl, and husband Walter became active in Saturday School, which Joy and I, along with Steve Handschu, started in the NFB of MI. Brunhilda quickly became an advocate for other parents and soon was feared by school administrators all around Michigan for her effectiveness. I respect and admire Brunhilda and her husband Walter for their support of the NFB and NOPBC through personal effort and financial support.

Dawn Neddo is another parent of a blind child whom we met through Saturday School. Dawn was elected president of our NOPBC in Michigan and held that position with distinction. As president of the Michigan affiliate, I worked closely with Dawn as we sought to establish an effective working relationship with parents and school personnel. Dawn gave selflessly of her time and resources. She was truly a difference-maker for parents and blind children in Michigan.

Rose Marie Bowman is another parent of blind children who became active through our Saturday School. Even when Rose Marie's children were grown, she continued to support our activities. Rose Marie is an excellent fund raiser; she always has some kind of fundraising activity going. Now, more than fifteen years later, she continues to help in any way she is able and attends every national convention.

Awardee, Joy Harris: While her husband Allen often stands in the limelight, Joy's efforts, initiatives, and dedication (often behind the scenes) have been no less than his. She is particularly well known for her corralling efforts and can often be heard to say, "Where were you at the last meeting?" or "Why didn't you come to Saturday School last month?" Sometimes people come because they don't want to get in trouble with Joy, and they never regret that they do. Joy has been a blind role model, mentor, and dedicated advocate for parents in every state she has lived in. Tough in recruiting, she is also full of love and kindness in her mentoring. She demands that the children she mentors live up to their potential, and her expectation empowers them to do just that.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Texas

Congratulations to the NOPBC from Texas Parents of Blind Children (TPOBC) for 25 years of helping raise expectations for blind children. You have provided the support, resources, and positive attitudes that help us see limitless possibilities for our blind kids. Imagine the future!

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of West Virginia

Together, making a difference; together, changing what it means to be blind. Thank you West Virginia Federationists. Charlene Smyth, NFBWV President.

Awardee, Julie Hunter: Julie's blind daughter Lauren was born in 1977. In 1984, when Lauren's school refused to give her cane travel instruction or allow her to carry a cane in school, the NFB came to the rescue. But, ever thorough in her approach, Julie checked out her options of parent organizations before making her commitment to the NOPBC and the NFB. Julie has been a loyal member of the organization ever since. She served as NOPBC board member from 1992-1994 and as NOPBC treasurer from 1994-2000. As NOPBC treasurer Julie established and organized such superior financial procedures that they have been complimented as a model for other NFB divisions and affiliates. Julie organized the first POBC in Colorado in 1987, served as its president for 18 years, and is currently treasurer. From 1992 to 1996 Julie also served as co-chair of Parents in Partnership for Deaf-Blind Children, an active committee of the NOPBC. She has been employed full-time, part-time, or as a volunteer for the Colorado Center for the Blind throughout those years. Although her daughter is now grown and lives an independent life, making her own choices and pursuing her own dreams for a master's degree in mediation, Julie continues to support actively the programs of the NFB and NOPBC. She was recently appointed to the Colorado Commission for the Blind. Loyal, reliable, dedicated, and unswerving in her belief in Federation philosophy, the scope of Julie's twig-bending in the NOPBC is incalculable.

Our Lauren grew up in the NFB, and look at her now—independent in mind, body, and spirit! Thank you, NOPBC. –Julie and Bob Hunter, Colorado

NFB

National Federation of the Blind

Of Colorado

The NFB of Colorado offers its heart-felt congratulations to NOPBC on its 25th anniversary and salutes it for its tireless efforts to offer parents of blind children the hope, support, and resources necessary to raise their blind children to be first class citizens. We remain firmly committed to providing the blind adults of tomorrow, our children today, with the greatest opportunity to lead full and free lives. That is why we created the Colorado Center for the Blind, which offers ground-breaking programs for blind youth of all ages. We particularly wish to commend Julie Hunter, a longtime leader and parent of a blind child, for her twenty plus years of unwavering and distinguished service to NOPBC and the Federation. As a token of our love we dedicate this sponsorship to you, Julie; you're the best!

Awardee, Nadine Jacobson: As first vice president and then president of the National Association to Promote the Use of Braille (NAPUB), Nadine paved the way for collaboration between NOPBC and NAPUB in the co-sponsorship of the Braille Readers Are Leaders contest and in the more recent establishment of the Braille Book Flea Market. She personally managed the contest out of her home for several years and continues to play an active role as a judge and advisor. As the blind parent of two adopted blind daughters, Elizabeth, age 16, and Catherine, age 13, she is also active in her home state of Minnesota and currently serves as vice president of the MN-POBC. A long-time active NFB member, Nadine is an important role model for ordinary people who are sometimes called to stand up in an extraordinary way. In 1985 she suffered an arrest, five hours in jail, and a trial for refusing, alongside her husband Steve, to give up a seat in an airplane exit row that had been randomly assigned to them. Today we stand up for Nadine and express our thanks.

Leading the Way Since 1988
COLORADO CENTER *for the* BLIND

The Colorado Center for the Blind is proud to be a sponsor of the NOPBC 25th anniversary celebration. Our NFB roots are clearly intertwined. The NOPBC has educated parents and professionals about the possibilities for blind children, and the CCB, through its training programs, has helped make those possibilities come true. We celebrate your past and we walk hand-in-hand into the future. Congratulations!

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Minnesota

The National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota honors the work of Steve and Nadine Jacobson, who have dedicated time and talent to the Braille Readers Are Leaders contest since its inception, and to the other Minnesota parents who have given much to improve opportunities for blind children.

Awardee, Dr. Kenneth Jernigan: Under his urging, direction, wisdom, and imagination, the framework and purposes of the NOPBC were formed. Every part of the NFB has been shaped by his visionary leadership; and, even though he died in 1998, his powerful words are as vibrantly alive to us now as they ever were. Teacher; friend; organizer; advisor; unyielding supporter; staunch defender; and extraordinary leader, writer, and speaker--volumes could not contain all that he was and all that he did. According to Barbara Cheadle it was his belief in her that gave her the confidence to take on the leadership of the parent division. Every one of the Twig Bender Award winners can claim the same thing; in one way or another Dr. Jernigan inspired, motivated, and empowered him or her to get involved and lead the way for a better future. He had faith that the NOPBC would grow and flourish and that parents and blind adults could work as colleagues and partners. He said that it is respectable to be blind. He said that the blind can compete on terms of equality. He said that with training and opportunity the average blind person can do what the average sighted person can do, and do it just as well. On this philosophical ground we raise our children. He was, and remains, our soil and sun.

Best wishes from John, Jenny, Rebecca, and Andrew Wai, Pennsylvania

In honor of Jason Polansky for his joyful nature, independent spirit, positive attitude, and love of learning. –Susan and Ed Polansky and Kevin and Dana Riffle, Maryland

Awardee, Mary Ellen Jernigan: Through the partnership of Dr. and Mary Ellen Jernigan, we have a model and proof that the blind and the sighted can be as one. Mary Ellen Jernigan was an invaluable sounding board and advisor to President Jernigan and continues to be so for President Maurer and also for our NOPBC president, Barbara Cheadle. Her encouragement and enthusiasm for the NOPBC have been unfailing from day one. As chairman of NFB convention organization and activities, she manages the mind-boggling logistics of the annual NFB national convention. Year after year she juggles the meeting room requests of all the divisions, affiliates, special committees, and outside groups. Not the least of those requests are the ever-expanding activities sponsored by the NOPBC. With unwavering fairness to all the groups competing for space and with a single-minded dedication to the overarching goal of the convention, she makes it possible for NOPBC to host a better national conference for parents than any other group in the nation. Her support, advice, and negotiating skills have been the bed rock of getting the most out of facilities. Mrs. Jernigan is also a dynamic speaker and powerful writer in her own right, and we wish she had time to do more of it.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of New Hampshire

Hope your celebration is wonderful. Maria Johnson, NFB-NH

Awardee, Denise Mackenstadt: Denise and her blind husband Gary were active in the NFB committee on adoption and parents that met at convention in 1980 (Denise and her husband are the adoptive parents of two sighted children). This group evolved into a broader committee that addressed general parenting and blindness issues, and it was this group, the parental concerns committee, that voted in 1981 to sponsor the first issue of the *NFB Newsletter for Parents of Blind Children*, later renamed *Future Reflections*. Denise, a founding member, has been continuously active in NOPBC at the national and state levels from 1983 to the present. She served a term as NOPBC secretary in 1985 and has chaired or served on the nominating committee and numerous other committees through the years. In 2001 she was awarded the Distinguished Educator of Blind Children Award for her innovative and exemplary performance as a paraprofessional serving blind students. Denise recently added orientation and mobility certification to her credentials and is now making contributions by applying the Federation's philosophy in her instruction of students in the public school system. She is a role model who lives out the example of what a teacher of blind students can and should be.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Connecticut

The NFB of Connecticut pays tribute in honor of John Carnemolla, a 2008 Braille Readers Are Leaders winner from CT.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of District of Columbia

The NFB of Washington D.C. pays tribute to the hard work and dedication of Joie Stuart. The youth and parents of blind children divisions are now a reality due to her organizational skills and commitment to our philosophy of equality and shared responsibility. Thank you Joie.

Awardee, Carla McQuillan: As the president of the NFB of Oregon from 1992 to 2006, Carla made advocacy for parents and blind children a priority. As an early childhood educator in the Montessori method, Carla has a natural passion for developing the self-discovery and independent decision-making that we know are keys to unlocking our children's success. Carla's association with the NOPBC began in 1993 with her management of the NOPBC-sponsored field trips for children on parent seminar day. In 1996 President Maurer appointed Carla to manage NFB Camp, the NFB childcare services at national convention. In that role she continues to serve and teach parents through professional care and mentoring of our children during the convention. Within the NFB Carla is an advocate for the importance of addressing early childhood issues. She made significant contributions to the 2005 Beginnings and Blueprints conference co-sponsored by the NOPBC and the NFB Jernigan Institute. Her dynamic leadership in education and her example as a role model have been significant in shaping and strengthening the future of our organization.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Kentucky
Parents of Blind Children Chapter

gratitude to NOPBC, Jamie and Maury Weedman and Pauletta Feldman, Kentucky

In honor of our children: Meg, Adam, and Lauren.
We love you, Mike and Marla Palmer, Utah

Awardee, Marc Maurer: President of the NFB since 1986, Marc Maurer has given the parents division the unwavering support of the executive office of the Federation. This support has been crucial to the empowerment and success of NOPBC. Through his vast knowledge of the law concerning the rights of the blind and the power of his office, he has bent the branch concerning the civil and educational rights of blind children. He wields his authority with judicious wisdom and unconditional love. By the children he is revered as the man who sits on the floor with them during the Kids' Talk session at convention. He talks to them about blindness and the NFB, tells them stories about his childhood, and gives them hope and inspiration for their futures. Youth groups who visit the NFB headquarters in Baltimore may find that the man teaching them how to grill a steak over a charcoal fire or wield a chainsaw to cut logs for the fireplace is none other than President Maurer. It is a lesson and a teacher they never forget.

Thank you to the NOPBC for working tirelessly toward a better future for blind children. We believe that joining the NOPBC and raising our daughter in the NFB is the best way we can ensure that she will grow into a happy, successful, independent adult. –John and Laura Weber and Lindsay Adair, Texas

Awardee, Dr. Abraham Nemeth: Dr. Nemeth's story in the Kernel book, *As The Twig Is Bent*, has been inspiring parents since 1992. But he began his own twig bending long before that when he determined as a blind teenager to find a better way to read and write mathematics. He accomplished what he set out to do. Today that method is used generally by Braille readers serious about math, and it bears his name: the Nemeth Braille code. At age 89 Dr. Nemeth continues his tireless, some even might say obsessive, work of a half century to improve and invent new Braille codes. His passion to make math and science accessible to blind students of all ages is matched only by his sense of humor and love of a good joke. He is never too busy to reach out to parents and to be a mentor, supporter, speaker, and advisor to them and their children in his home state of Michigan and nationally. He urges anyone he meets to attend our "electric" NFB conventions, and he gently admonishes parents to raise their blind children with the same expectations and sense of responsibility that they have for their sighted kids.

MEMORIES of the NOPBC

by Myra Lesser, Arizona

My blind son Alex and I attended our first NFB convention in 1992 in North Carolina. At the NOPBC business meeting I was nominated from the floor to serve on the board. I served on the board for three years. It was always difficult for us because during those years we earned most of our income in the summer, but it was definitely worth the sacrifice to spend the week with the other NFB families.

Because of the NFB Alex began using a cane at age three, which was pretty unusual back then. Alex was a Braille Readers Are Leaders contest winner when he was in first grade, which was an important accomplishment at a time when he was struggling in school. If we hadn't learned the philosophy of the NFB, we would never have imagined that Alex could be in the high school marching band. With encouragement and ideas from several NFB members, he proudly played the trumpet and marched all through high school. Alex is now 21 years old. He graduated from high school two years ago and is currently doing an internship at a local Tucson radio station. He is totally engrossed in computers and hopes to pursue a career in radio.

Awardee, Barbara Pierce: Barbara was the social skills guru for NOPBC years before she inaugurated Miss Whozit in the *Braille Monitor*. She established her Miss Manners credentials in the eighties when she gave a speech about love, dating, and marriage at the NOPBC annual seminar. The speech is still in print and is circulated widely in a social skills literature packet that is stuffed with other articles she has written for *Future Reflections*. Despite a grueling schedule at the national conventions as the NFB public relations director, she always found time to share her wisdom and knowledge with parents as a keynote speaker or workshop leader. If she wasn't on the agenda, she was a supportive presence in the audience, listening, knitting, laughing, and helping with comments and questions. Barbara was also instrumental in establishing and conducting the convention teen talks for young blind women. In these confidential, safe, and supportive sessions, blind teen girls could ask the most embarrassing personal questions and get honest and helpful answers. As president of the NFB of Ohio, she made the organizing and integrating of parents into the affiliate's leadership a top priority. She embraced parents as colleagues and important allies in the battle for civil rights, and the relationship between the POBC of Ohio and the NFB-OH became a model for other state affiliates. Whenever we have called, she has answered, though she often didn't wait but called and said, "What can I do?" And we answered, "Plenty!" With prior notice or with none, she never fails to give NOPBC her very best.

Brad & Jill Weatherd: We honor our beautiful, smart, clever, and talented Hannah.
You make our lives richer!

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Ohio

Congratulations to the NOPBC on this silver anniversary of your beginnings as a life-changing force in the lives of families with blind children. In honor of this important occasion the NFB of Ohio recognizes the presidents of its parents division:

Colleen Roth—first and only blind president of our division. Colleen's calling has been to work with multiply disabled blind children.

Cindy Conley—elected last November after years of dedicated service to the division and her local chapter. Cindy is a wonderful organizer who is very difficult to say no to. We are proud to pay tribute to these colleagues and to salute the division that has brought them into our movement.

Kathy Arthurs—mother of a deaf-blind daughter. Kathy worked to integrate the parents division into the entire affiliate.

Crystal McClain—our longest-serving president. Crystal has built the division and set a high standard of contribution in every way to the entire organization.

Awardee, Ruby Ryles: Dr. Ruby Ryles is the principal professor in the two master's programs training teachers of blind students at Louisiana Tech University. The 1992 Distinguished Educator of Blind Children award winner, Ruby produced research data about the employment rates of Braille readers that we cite when we argue in IEP meetings for Braille instruction for our low-vision children. Her transcribed speech on education, "Is Your Child Age Appropriate?" is still the most influential and widely read of all we publish, and she gave NOPBC national recognition when her article "A Blind Child in a Regular Pre-School" was circulated through the Head Start program. But long before she was Dr. Ryles, the researcher and head of a rigorous university program, she was the mom of a blind son named Dan, a Braille teacher, and a leader in the NOPBC. Ruby served three terms on the NOPBC board starting in 1985, served as NOPBC second vice president from 1988-1991, and then was first vice president from 1992-1998. A riveting speaker and pioneer educator in the field of blindness, she is still doggedly bending the branch to give Braille the status it deserves.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Delaware

In loving and appreciative memory of Ruth Whalen and Edith Moller, the NFB of Delaware is pleased to be a sponsor of the 25th anniversary of the NOPBC.

Ruth Whalen worked tirelessly, traveling around the state to organize the Central Delaware and Sussex County chapters of NFB-D. She was quite ill for much of her final years as state president, but she never faltered in her duties. Ruth died in December of 1987.

Edith Moller, mother of Ruth Whalen, was over 60 when she learned to drive so that she could transport her daughter throughout lower Delaware. Edith continued to support the NFB-D long after her daughter died. Edith Moller, age 92, died on March 14, 2008.

As a leader in the state affiliate, I owe all I have learned about the Federation to Ruth Whalen; I only hope I can be as good a mentor to others in the NFB-D as she was to me.

-Deborah Briddell, Past President, National Federation of the Blind of Delaware.

Awardee, Dr. Fredric Schroeder: In 1979, working as a travel teacher in Nebraska, Dr. Schroeder, without fanfare or millions of research dollars justifying his idea, placed a white cane in the hands of an eight-year-old and began teaching the child to travel with it. The next year, after he had been hired by the Albuquerque School District, he had the audacity and the foresight, the common sense and the trust in his own instincts to place a cane in the hands of a kindergartner and teach that child how to use it. The American Association of Workers for the Blind (precursor to AER) warned that Dr. Schroeder was damaging the kids. The AAWB said giving young children canes would establish bad habits because developmentally children could not hold and use the cane with proper adult technique. Using NFB and NOPBC philosophy, he reasoned that, according to this logic, children shouldn't use eating utensils until they had adult coordination. He proved that our philosophy was sound, but it would be another decade before the established profession would consider the possibility and announce this policy as their own. You know you have a great idea when some one else wants to steal it. He also did the matching of writing pals in the first decade of the Slate Pals program, 1984-1994. Prolific speaker and writer, energetic innovator who keeps going and going, friend, and brilliant teacher with uncommon sense, Fred has humor dry as a bone, and his passion for justice is fierce as a flame. In short, he leaps tall buildings in a single bound—he is our staunch supporter, for which we are eternally grateful.

When I was a preschooler, my mother, Melissa Mattioli, took me to a weekend program at a school for the blind. She was surprised to see blind children my own age drinking from bottles, unable to feed themselves, and wearing diapers. She knew that this was not age appropriate. Although at that time she did not know how she was going to manage, she knew that I could do more. Her expectations for me were always the same as for my sighted sister. She was my advocate and taught me how to advocate for myself. I always believed I would have a full and productive life, because she believed it. She had Federation philosophy, even though we did not know the Federation until I was seventeen. For over 25 years she has quietly and tirelessly dedicated herself to supporting other parents in Pennsylvania. I can't begin to count the number of hours she has spent talking

to parents on the telephone, advocating at IEP meetings, and making her part of the world a better place for blind children. I am thankful for all that she has given to me and proud of her work for others. –Lynn (Mattioli) Baillif, Maryland, in tribute to Lisa Mattioli, former NOPBC board member and leader in the POBC-PA.

Awardee, Debbie Kent-Stein: Debbie has been a mainstay NOPBC supporter. She has acted as a contact for parents in Illinois for over twenty years, attending IEP's, mentoring blind youth, counseling over the phone and in person, advising, and referring. She has also been a mentor nationwide, helping many families understand and embrace our philosophy. Debbie has been an important and fundamental contributor to our literature and is a much sought-after speaker and presenter at NOPBC convention workshops and around the country. She was an early partner with Barbara Pierce in the girl/boy talks at our national conventions. In 1994 Debbie took responsibility for the Slate Pals program. With imagination and devotion she has matched hundreds of blind children and teens (occasionally some sighted ones interested in Braille) from all over the world to be writing pals. Under her management all these children have had someone to write to in their own medium—and received letters they could read from a friend. Debbie's passion for increasing opportunities for blind children cannot be quenched.

NFB

National Federation of the Blind

Of Illinois

When I was growing up as a blind child in the 1950s, my parents were basically on their own. They had no blind adults as positive role models, and they had little idea what the future might hold for me. Today, thanks to the NOPBC, that situation has changed for thousands of families. The NOPBC is leading the way for a new generation of parents and their blind children. It is showing today's families that it is respectable to be blind and teaching them to push the limits of possibility. --Debbie Kent-Stein, first vice president of the NFB of Illinois

Awardee, Gail Wagner: 1993 Distinguished Educator. Gail first attended NFB events as a teenager with her aunt, long-time Federation leader and NFB of South Dakota President Karen Mayry (who died just last year). It was then that she decided she wanted to teach kids to grow up to be like her aunt and the other NFB members she had met. She wore an NFB T-shirt to her first day of teacher-of-blind-student training in college. The instructor put her down for it, but she knew who she was and what the NFB was, and she never backed down—and she graduated anyway. As luck would have it, Fred Schroeder was hiring his first teacher of blind students in New Mexico just after Gail graduated;

he left, but she stayed and is still teaching and spreading Federation philosophy. Gail modernized our teen hospitality at convention and was an early teen program coordinator. Valued for her speaking and workshop presentations, also active in her local NFB, she continues to bring parents and blind children to the NFB family.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of New Mexico

Congratulations to the NOPBC on this significant anniversary. In honor of this occasion the NFB of New Mexico wishes to recognize parents who have made a lasting contribution to the New Mexico POBC:

Sherry Abraham, a tireless advocate for blind children who revived the NMPOBC in the 1990's and provided strong leadership when it was greatly needed.

Gail Wagner, teacher of the visually impaired, who has contributed her talents, energy, and enthusiasm to the NMPOBC and the NFB of NM for two decades and counting.

Barbara Snow, a past leader of the NMPOBC who established Project Independence, a summer program for blind children emphasizing social skills, personal care, and recreational activities.

Congratulations to NOPBC for 25 years of helping blind children and their families to aim for the stars. Attending both state and national conventions was both a source of inspiration for me and my daughter and a special time for the two of us to share. It was always inspiring to meet so many happy, proud blind people. The opportunity to socialize with other parents was invaluable. We attended conventions in Dallas, New Orleans, Charlotte, and Atlanta. My daughter, Jennifer Espinoza, was a participant in a student panel at the convention in Charlotte. She won several prizes in Braille Readers Are Leaders, which were very meaningful to all of us. Jennifer now works at Very Special Arts of New Mexico and is on a self-advocacy board with the city of Albuquerque. We would like to thank everyone at the NFB, and also special thanks to Jennifer's teachers, Gail Wagner and Rye Gerry, who gave her so many gifts, especially the gift of reading Braille. With best wishes for the next 25 years–Barbara Snow, New Mexico

Awardee, Ramona Walhof: Ramona was present with Susan Ford, Doris Willoughby, Barbara Cheadle, and Dr. Jernigan at the writing of the NOPBC constitution. Later it was Ramona who conceived the idea of presenting exemplary educators with the Distinguished Educator of Blind Children Award. It was and continues to be extremely important to recognize excellence in the field and, contrary to some voices of opposition, to demonstrate that we do indeed value and desire to work with professionals in the field. From 1988 to the present these award winners have attended and given a major presentation to the NOPBC at conventions. Five of our Twig-Benders were recipients of our educator award and have, by earning the As The Twig Is Bent Award, demonstrated long-term, above-and-beyond devotion and service to the NFB and the NOPBC. Ramona herself exemplifies the above-and-beyond spirit. A tireless champion for blind children and a passionate advocate for Braille literacy, she gives her all.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Idaho

Elsie Lamp on behalf of the NFB of Idaho gives special thanks and recognition to Maria Alvarez, Mark and Deborah Stengel, Sara Sims, and Branden Lane for their contributions to the POBC-ID.

John, you know how much we appreciate your talents and how proud we are of your many accomplishments. –Papa, Nannie, and Molly Delamain, North Carolina

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Indiana

The NFB of Indiana would like to thank Tammy Hollingsworth, president of the Indiana POBC, for her dedication at the state and national levels.

Awardee, Loretta White: Loretta White is a worker bee who gives her all to get the job done with no thought for praise or recognition. As the mother of Nicole, a blind daughter with autism and other disabilities, Loretta demonstrated that Federation philosophy, high expectations, and good instruction in blindness skills also pay dividends in higher performance and quality of life for those with additional disabilities. Loretta developed and expanded the NOPBC outreach to parents of blind, multiply disabled students through workshops, articles, and

an informal parent-to-parent network. She shared her diverse talents in grant-writing and disseminated that information through workshops. Her programs at the state level became models for other POBCs. Loretta has been a valued advisor to NOPBC leaders about blind children with multiple disabilities and a mentor and role model for all parents.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Maryland

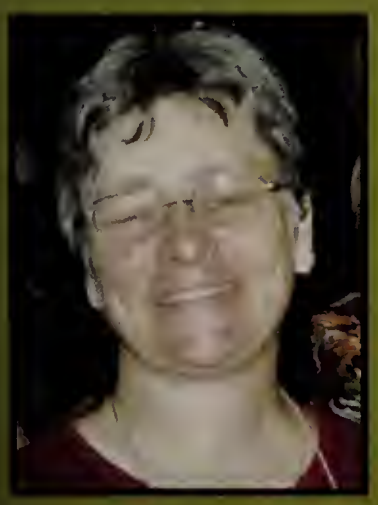
Congratulations to the NOPBC on this significant anniversary. In honor of this occasion, the NFB of Maryland wishes to recognize the presidents of its parents division. We cannot list all of their achievements; here are the highlights:

Barbara Cheadle, who through thick and thin always made sure that Maryland had a strong parents division;

Sandy Halverson, who demonstrated the importance of blind role models;

Loretta White, who made sure that blind students had the opportunity to fully participate in Maryland's educational standardized testing program and developed innovative programs such as KIDS Camp;

Danielle Becker, who fostered a close working relationship with the Maryland Library for the Blind;



Karen Herstein, who made sure that the parents division was an integral part of the affiliate;

Bob Watson, who started and maintains the Maryland parents listserv and Web site; and

Susan Polansky, who is carrying the torch to the next generation of parents through leadership in advocacy.

Behind every president are devoted members, and this tribute is for them too; the list is too long to enumerate.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Texas

The NFB of Texas is pleased to welcome the NOPBC to the Lone Star State for its 25th anniversary celebration. Congratulations on your many accomplishments and best wishes for many successes to come.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of West Virginia

The NFB of West Virginia is pleased to be a sponsor for the NOPBC as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. We wish the NOPBC continued success in the future.

Awardee, Doris Willoughby: Introduced to the Federation by her husband Curtis, Doris went back to school in the sixties to become certified to teach blind children. We had very little constructive literature on the education of blind children before the advent of Future Reflections and the establishment of NOPBC, but Doris 's early publications predated these landmarks by about ten years. The first edition of Your School Includes a Blind Child was released in 1973, the second edition in 1981, and A Resource Guide for Parents and Educators of Blind Children in 1979. These publications were critical in the first outreach efforts of the NOPBC and Future Reflections. Easy-to-read and full of practical tips, these books demonstrated to parents and teachers how to apply the Federation's philosophy to the education of blind students. Doris went on to co-author with Sharon (Duffy) Monthei what many parents consider our NOPBC Bible: the Handbook for Itinerant and Resource Teachers of Blind and Visually Impaired Students (1989). Later, in 1998, they teamed up again to write

the Modular Instruction for Independent Travel. But Doris's contributions extend far beyond her publications. Year after year she contributed to the NOPBC as a seminar speaker, workshop leader, advisor, and mentor to parents. The first NOPBC project was the distribution of the video, Kids With Canes, and it was Doris who volunteered to manage its distribution, dissemination, and sale from her home. Her faith in the abilities of blind children and her courage in shouting that faith from the rooftops in her profession not only bent the newly forming twigs of the NOPBC but snapped off some branches of the profession's old philosophy based on misconceptions about blindness.

Awardee, Joanne Wilson: The minutes of the 1984 NOPBC board meeting note that Joanne made the official motion to establish the Braille Readers Are Leaders national Braille contest. Many of our award winners don't remember all that they have done for the NOPBC, and Joanne didn't recall this. But if you look in the nooks and crannies of NOPBC history, you will find Joanne had a hand in creating and shaping almost every major initiative. She made the motion at the 1981 parental concerns committee to launch a newsletter for parents of blind children; she was the first NFB state president to organize a state parents of blind children division--the POBC of Louisiana--and she did some major twig-bending when she boosted the early circulation of *Future Reflections* by adding every known specialized teacher and parent of a blind child in the state of Louisiana to the subscription list. Later she expanded the opportunities for blind children and youth to learn blindness skills and Federation philosophy by adding special summer programs for them at the Louisiana Center for the Blind. Joanne has long valued parents as colleagues. Most recently, through her position as executive director of the Affiliate Action Department at our national office, she established the Parent Leadership Program to expand and strengthen POBC divisions around the country. She is in competition with Fred Schroeder for the energizer award; she just keeps on going and going and giving and giving. And we are very glad she does.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Louisiana

The NFB of Louisiana congratulates the NOPBC on 25 years of changing lives. We appreciate the dedication of our parent leaders: Lena Vasseur, Fannie Soileau, Sandy Dunnam, Carolyn Sasser, and Sandy Taboada, along with many other committed NFB-L members who assisted with activities for parents and families. We also recognize Joanne Wilson, who dreamed of increasing opportunities and programs for blind children. Joanne's dynamic leadership and ability to dream big have challenged all of us. We commend Barbara Cheadle for her outstanding leadership and the other parents who have served on the NOPBC board over the years. Your efforts have helped make the future brighter for our blind children.

When, as a blind child, I asked my mother if I could do something, she never said no; she only said, "Perhaps you can do more." When parents of other blind children asked for her help, she never said no; she only said, "Perhaps I can do more." Such has been her philosophy, such has been her life, and such has been her example. For all three I can only say a heartfelt, "Thank you." –Michael Baillif, Associate General Counsel, Ernst & Young LLP, in tribute to Shirley Baillif, former NOPBC board member and president of the California Parents of Blind Children.

Dan Ryles Memorial Award

NOPBC is pleased to present the first Dan Ryles Memorial Award in recognition of inspiration, role modeling, and a significant contribution to the literature about the education of blind children to Dr. Ruby Ryles.

The staff, students, and alumni of the Louisiana Center for the Blind congratulate the NOPBC on this historic occasion. We especially honor Dr. Ruby Ryles for the outstanding contributions she has made to enriching the lives of blind children. Dr. Ryles's passion and dedication have inspired and empowered parents, teachers, and blind people to strive for excellence. The last 25 years have seen remarkable growth and increased opportunities. We commend the leaders of the NOPBC and stand ready to assist as we plan for a future bright with promise for the next generation!

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Massachusetts

NFB-MA: Cheers to the NOPBC on its 25th anniversary. We look forward to a continued successful partnership with NOPBC and would like to acknowledge the years of committed service by Priscilla Ferris, former president of the NFB-MA.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of North Dakota

Thank you NOPBC for your contributions to our younger generation of blind people. We hope that the next 25 years will be as good or better than the last.
–NFB of North Dakota

The Distinguished Educator of Blind Children Award

The Distinguished Educator of Blind Children award is given annually by the NFB at the national convention. The award winner is required to deliver a keynote address to the NOPBC and is asked to meet with parents throughout the convention to share his or her knowledge. The award was established in 1988.

2008 Brigid Doherty, VA, education services coordinator, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
2007 Sister Margaret Fleming, PA, principal, St. Lucy Day School
2006 Gayle Prillaman, TN, teacher of blind students
2005 Merry-Noel Chamberlain, IA, teacher of blind students
2004 Jan Zollinger, ID, teacher of blind students
2003 Dr. Sheila Amato, NY, teacher of blind students
2002 Debbie Head, MO, teacher of blind students
2001 Denise Mackenstadt, WA, paraeducator of blind students
2000 Marlene Culpepper, GA, teacher of blind students
1999 Debbie Baker, OH, teacher of blind students
1998 Dr. James Bickford, WA, director of education, WA State School for the Blind
1997 Debbie Prost, VA, teacher of blind students
1996 Ann Boyd, OH, teacher of blind students
1995 Dr. Hilda Caton, KY, university professor and author
1994 Joe Cutter, NJ, orientation and mobility instructor
1993 Gail Wagner, NM, teacher of blind students
1992 Dr. Ruby Ryles, WA, supervisor, Bellingham School District VI program
1991 Dr. Ralph Bartley, KS, superintendent, KS State School for the Visually Handicapped
1990 Doris Willoughby, IA, author and teacher of blind students
1989 Kim Bosshart (Adams), NE, teacher of blind students
1988 Evelyn Riggan, OR, teacher of blind students

NOPBC Boards (Remember the Past…)

Delores Scearce, MI; Barbara Cheadle, MD; Betty Shandrow, AZ

1988

Back row, left to right
Ruby Ryles, WA;
Debbie Hamm, OR;
Beverly Helmboldt, MI

Front row, left to right
Delores Scearce, MI;
Barbara Cheadle, MD;
Betty Shandrow, AZ

1990

Standing left to right
Debra Smith, IA;
Tom Balek, KS;
Martin Greiser, MT;
Stephanie Martin, WA

Seated) left to right
Ruby Ryles, WA;
Barbara Cheadle, MD;
Charlotte Verduin, IL;

2000

Standing left to right
Maria Jones, KY;
Samuel Baldwin, MO;
Mark McClain, OH; Brad
Weatherd, MT;
Sally Miller, SC;
Tammy Hollingsworth, IN

Seated left to right
Martin Greiser, MT;
Christine Faltz, NY;
Barbara Cheadle, MD;
Carol Castellano, NJ;
Brunhilde Merk-Adam, MI;

2001

Standing left to right
Martin Greiser, MT;
Brunhilde Merk-Adam, MI;
Marla Palmer, UT;
Mark
McClain, OH;
Brad Weatherd, MT;

Seated left to right
Maria Jones, KY;
Tammy Hollingsworth, IN;
Barbara Cheadle, MD;
Carol Castellano, NJ

The 2008 NOPBC Board

Barbara Cheadle, Maryland (NOPBC president 1985 to present, various offices MD-POBC 1987 to present) Barbara is the founding editor (1982) of *Future Reflections* and director of children's programs for the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults. Barbara helped write the NOPBC constitution, was the first treasurer, and has presided over the NOPBC for 23 of its 25 years. Barbara and her husband John, who is the director of program facilities at the national headquarters of the NFB, have three children: John E. (Cheadle) Rich, 31; Charles (Chaz), 30, who is blind from congenital glaucoma; and Anna Hughes, 26. The Cheadles' fight to get Braille instruction for Chaz (who has partial vision) was widely publicized in the early 90s and was one of the factors that turned the tide in the campaign for a Braille literacy provision in the 1997 IDEA amendments. Chaz has a BA with a major in ancient studies and a certificate in women's studies. After graduation he worked as an educator for a local nonprofit and as a ship's cook. He and his wife Emily live near D.C., where he now works as a computer support specialist. John and Barbara have attended every convention since 1975, and Chaz and his siblings were too young to remember their first conventions.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Colorado
Parents of Blind Children Chapter

Congratulations NOPBC. Colorado Parents of Blind Children wishes to honor Barbara Cheadle for 25 years of outstanding leadership. Thank you.

Carol Castellano, New Jersey (NOPBC first vice president 1998 to present, second vice president 1991-1998, and president POBC-NJ) Carol is the acclaimed author of *Making It Work, The Bridge to Braille*, and *Because Books Matter*; and the editor of the POBC-NJ newsletter. Carol recently started a new career as the outreach and recruitment coordinator for the teacher of blind students training program at the College of New Jersey: a program she helped establish. Carol and her husband Bill Cucco have two children: Serena, age 24, blind from retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), and John, 21. Serena graduated in 2007 with a degree in sociology and social justice and is currently employed as a life skills advocate with the Office of Public Defender in Newark, NJ. Son John made important contributions to the NOPBC Web page as an NFB summer intern. Carol attended her first convention in 1990 then went back to tell her family where they would be spending their 4th of Julys from then on.

Here's to our Serena, the inspiration for it all. And congratulations to NOPBC--we couldn't have done it without you. –Carol Castellano and Bill Cucco, New Jersey

Brad Weatherd, Wyoming (NOPBC board 2002, second vice president 2006 to present, and treasurer NFB-WY) Brad inaugurated the NOPBC Dads' Night Out and with wife Jill has hosted the NOPBC Family Hospitality. Brad is a rangeland management specialist with the US Forest Service. He and Jill have two children: Hannah, age 15, blind from congenital cataracts, detached retina, and glaucoma; and son Levi, age 13. Hannah starred in a McDonald's commercial when she was six and is currently a 4H grand champion for poultry and rabbits. They have been to 13 consecutive conventions.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Wyoming

The NFB of Wyoming congratulates Brad Weatherd and family for their contributions to the NOPBC and the Wyoming affiliate and for all that they have done for their daughter, Hannah

Carrie Gilmer, Minnesota (NOPBC board 2005, secretary 2006 to present, president MN-POBC) Carrie has been a leader in the MN-POBC since 1999, and she worked for the last five years at BLIND, Inc. She initiated and coordinates a monthly program for teens and a Saturday school, where blind kids and their parents can learn from blind mentors and practice blindness techniques. Carrie and husband Phillip Richardson have four children: Joe, age 26, Kate, age 22, Jordan, age 17, blind from cone-rod dystrophy, and Maya, age 10. Jordan is an honor student and loves cartoons, sports, science, and foreign languages. Carrie and Jordan attended their first convention in 1999 in Atlanta, where he received his first cane.

Jordan, you never gave up. We are proud and forever grateful for all in our NFB/ NOPBC family. –Carrie Gilmer and Phillip Richardson, Minnesota

Sandy Taboada, Louisiana (NOPBC board 1998-2002 and treasurer 2002 to present, president LA-POBC, and secretary LA-NFB) Sandy manages the NOPBC seminar registration every year with the same integrity and competence she brings to all the offices she holds in the NFB. In her professional life she is Dr. Merchant, a professor and doctor of veterinary dermatology at Louisiana State University. Sandy and her husband Joe Taboada, also a veterinarian,

have two sons: Michael, age 15, blind from optic nerve pressure caused by a benign tumor, and Robert, age 13. Michael is a Boy Scout and an avid ham radio operator. They have attended 10 conventions since 1997.

With love and gratitude to NOPBC/NFB, LCB, teachers, Beryl Threeton, Gail Canova, Beverly Tully, Lindsay Silvio, Linda Spain, Lisa Noteboom, and Colin Jackson, who have been a part of Michael's life. We are very proud of the young men that Michael and Robert have grown to be. –Joe and Sandy Taboada, Louisiana

Jim Beyer, Montana (NOPBC board 2007, chair of HOPE, Helping Other Parents Excel, the POBC affiliate in Montana) Jim is a contractor and real estate broker. He ***and*** his wife Gwen have two sons and one daughter: Jordan, 17; Luke, 15; and Lauren, 14, who is blind from Leber's congenital amaurosis. Lauren was named Most Philosophical Fifth Grader in America in 2005 and today loves literature, make-up, and the friends she has made at the Teen Hospitality Room at convention. The family attended their first convention in 2005.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Montana

A salute to Montana Parents: Marty Greiser: Almost two decades ago Marty Greiser found the NOPBC. For many years afterward he was the lone parent from Montana attending national conventions. With the help of the NOPBC he became an expert on educating his blind son and on the IEP in all its arcane minutiae, expertise that he eagerly shared with other parents. He served on the NOPBC board for a number of years. He was hungry when he came; he was nourished; he then nourished others. He served because he believed. Brad and Jill Weatherd: There's a story that after Brad and Jill attended their first convention Brad commented that this was how they'd be spending their vacations from now on. The story may be apocryphal, but they have been with us ever since. Brad and Jill took the baton from Marty and passed it on before they moved to Wyoming. Jim and Gwen Beyer: Benefitting from the parents that came before them, Jim and Gwen came to

their first convention in 2005. They left with the determination to bring the word to other Montana parents and to form a Montana division for parents of blind children. It became official in 2007. Barb Rolf: A long-time outreach consultant for the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind and a parent of a blind child, Barb brought influence and connections that were vital in forming the Montana parents division. Emily Coleman: Emily serves as co-chair of the parents division in Montana and played an important role in the development of the Montana parents division. Her qualities of leadership are apparent to professionals and parents alike.

Rose Marie Bowman, Michigan (NOPBC board 2007; various offices MI-POBC, 1989-2002) Rose Marie says she is now just an ordinary member of the MI-POBC. We say there is nothing ordinary about her. She is active in the Telephone Pioneers and is a technical specialist for AT&T. She is most famous for selling NOPBC 50/50 raffle tickets. Rose Marie has seven children: Brickie, 41; Vickie, 34; Lisa, 30; Cyntina, 26, who is blind from congenital cataracts and glaucoma; Willie, 24; and twins Tamika and Tonisha, age 23. Cyntina lives independently in her own apartment and loves to sing and play board games. Rose Marie has attended 10 conventions.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Michigan

The NFB of Michigan congratulates NOPBC and pays tribute to the state and national parent leaders from the great state of Michigan: Beverly Helmboldt, Delores Hayes, Rose Marie Bowman, Marie Glaze, Donna Biro, Sunny Emerson, Dawn Neddo, Brunhilda Merk-Adam, Lydia Shuck, and Sharon Darga.

Debby Brackett, Florida (NOPBC board member 2004 to present, president FL-POBC) Debby coordinates the NOPBC table at the NFB national convention exhibit hall and is the founding president of our Florida POBC. Debby and her husband Bob own and operate Bracketts' Landscaping. They have three children: Luke, 17, Daniel, 12, and daughter Winona, 12, who was adopted from China and who is blind from ROP. Winona loves music and earned a superior rating on her trumpet in solo competition this year. The family attended their first convention in 2000.

MEMORIES of the NOPBC

by Debby Brackett, Florida

In 1998 our family heard about a little girl in Hong Kong who was searching for her "own family." The problem, we heard, was that she was blind. Not knowing anyone who was blind, we contacted every agency and organization that worked with the blind. Barbara Cheadle of the NOPBC not only wrote back, but called us. She offered support and encouragement. Thus began a long relationship with Barbara, the NOPBC, the NFB, and, most important, that little girl in Hong Kong. Nine months later that little girl entered our home as our daughter, Winona.

Our first convention was one year later in Atlanta in 2000, where Winona was given her first cane, her little face lighting up with joy at the increased independence it afforded her. Today we have many friends in the blind community that have so blessed our lives with their advice and friendship. We can't imagine not being a part of such a wonderful group of people.

NFB

National Federation of the Blind

Of Florida

The NFB of Florida is pleased to support the 25th anniversary celebration of NOPBC. We are making our donation in the name of Debby Brackett, founder and current president of FOPBC. Her leadership, devotion, and hard work are invaluable to ensure that the division continues to grow and thrive. We love and appreciate you, Debby.

Denise Colton, Utah (NOPBC board 2007, board member UT-POBC) Denise is an important new asset to our leadership. Professionally Dr. Denise Colton is a psychologist specializing in the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents. With the Federation's help Denise and her husband Rick are fighting to get Braille for their daughters Katie, 15 and Kristie, 10, both of whom are losing vision from Stargardt's disease. Katie, a lover of science and math, hopes to become a meteorologist. Kristie would like to become a singer and horse rehabilitator. The Coltons attended their first convention in Louisville in 2005.

The Colton family (Rick, Denise, Katie, and Kristie) of Utah wishes to honor Cheralyn Creer with our NOPBC celebration contribution. Cheralyn's generosity in the sharing of her time as well as her personal and professional expertise has had a tremendous positive influence on our children, as well as on us as parents. She is an outstanding mentor, role model, and friend. Our family is truly blessed to have Cheralyn in our lives and in our hearts.

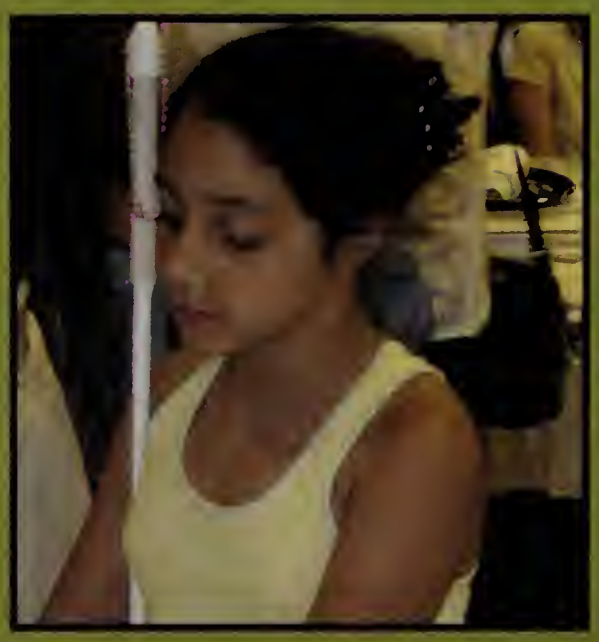
Elizabeth Frampton, Rhode Island (NOPBC board member 2007, president RI-PBVI) An articulate and passionate advocate for blind kids, Elizabeth is co-chair of the advisory board to the Rhode Island Vision Education Service Program. Elizabeth and her husband John own their own business, BitWisdom Technologies LLC. They have three children: John (JW), who is nine and blind from ROP; Laura, age seven; and Blaisedel, age five. JW is a two-time Braille Readers Are Leaders contest winner, and he has an orange belt in karate. Elizabeth and JW attended their first convention in 2007.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Rhode Island

The NFB of Rhode Island congratulates Barbara Cheadle and the NOPBC for the 25 years of great service they have provided to parents nationwide.

Maria Garcia, New York (NOPBC board member 2004 to present, president NY-POBC) An active and dynamic leader, she was appointed by the governor of New York in 2007 to the executive board of the NY Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. A lieutenant in the NYC Fire Department, she and her partner Dave Gill, a paramedic instructor, have presented seminars on CPR and safety at convention for kids and adults. Maria has one daughter Elora, age 11, who is blind from birth and also has cerebral palsy (CP). Elora says that CP is more of a problem than blindness. Elora is a girls' girl and loves anything pink. Maria attended her first convention in 2003.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of New York



Congratulations from the NFB of New York. Many of us wish that there had been a POBC when we were young. The efforts put forth by Barbara Cheadle, Maria Garcia, and all who work with them are creating a future full of promise for blind children. The blind children of today can really "imagine the possibilities." Thank you POBC for helping to change what it means to be blind from the ground up.

David Hammel, Iowa (NOPBC board member 2007, vice president IA-POBC) David, a metallurgical engineer, is married to Barbara, who is blind, and they are both leaders in our new parents' chapter in Iowa. They have twin sons, both blind with microphthalmia. Adopted from China, Jesse and Paul are five years old. Paul loves to sing, and Jesse, who is just starting to come out of his shell, is a champion Little Smokie eater who can eat twenty-one in one sitting. (We feel a state fair competition coming on.) David attended his first convention in Louisville in 2005.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Iowa

The NFB of Iowa salutes the NOPBC and Barbara Cheadle for their tireless efforts in reaching out to blind youth around the country and teaching them the philosophy given to us by Dr. tenBroek, Dr. Jernigan, and Dr. Maurer, a philosophy that can help assure their successful futures. Iowa is delighted to have an active POBC. We strongly believe that blind children are the future leaders of the NFB, and anything we can do to ground these children in our positive philosophy is time and money well spent. Cordially, Michael D. Barber, president NFBIA

Stephanie Kieszak-Holloway, Georgia (NOPBC board member 2006 to present, president GA-POBC) Stephanie is the energetic and successful founder of our parent division in Georgia. A biostatistician, she and her husband Richard Holloway have two daughters and one son: Sarah, 14; Kendra, five and blind from microphthalmia, cataracts, PHPV, aniridia, and detached retina; and RJ, two. Kendra never met a musical instrument she didn't want to own or play. She is already a Braille reader and is more literate than most of her sighted peers. The family attended their first convention in 2004 in Atlanta.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Georgia

A 25th Anniversary tribute from the National Federation of the Blind of Georgia to our National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, under the faithful leadership of Mrs. Barbara Cheadle, for support and collaboration with our Georgia Organization of Parents of Blind Children, diligently coordinated by Mrs. Stephanie Kieszak-Holloway, as we all work to foster the growth and development of independent, responsible, productive blind youth, who are indeed the future of the National Federation of the Blind.

Barbara Mathews, California (NOPBC board member 2002 to present, president CA-POBC) An attorney, Barbara is a vice president and corporate secretary of Edison International (EIX) and Southern California Edison (SCE). Barbara organizes and moderates the NOPBC Parent Power workshops at national convention. She is a savvy IEP advocate for parents in her state and does pro bono work for parents when she can. Barbara and husband Rob Sweeney have two daughters: Kiko, 15, and Kyra, 14, who is blind from Leber's congenital amaurosis. Kyra enjoys singing and also plays the flute and piano. Kyra and her mother traveled to England last summer on a trip with Kyra's school choir. The family first attended a national convention in 1998.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of California

We salute the Californians--parents and the NFBC--who came together to fight for educational opportunities for California's blind children. As a result California can be proud to lead the way with Braille reading, writing, and mathematics standards for its youth. California's parents of blind children can learn about Braille and how to use the IEP process for themselves. In acknowledgement of the work being done and in recognition of the work that still must be accomplished, the NFBC sponsors the NOPBC. Continue to dream and plan carefully, and hope will become reality.

Pat Renfranz, Utah (NOPBC board 2007, secretary UT-POBC) Pat is a bio-genetics scientist. Within the NOPBC she is taking a leadership role in the committee for the implementation of textbooks on time. She and her husband David Blair have two daughters, Caroline, 12, blind from bilateral microphthalmia, and Camille, age eight. Caroline is an outdoors enthusiast who especially enjoys hiking, running, and rock climbing. At the NFB 2008 Washington Seminar, Caroline convinced Senator Hatch of Utah of the importance of the quiet cars issue through her personal testimony. They attended their first convention in 2005.

NFB
National Federation of the Blind
Of Utah

The NFB of Utah congratulates NOPBC on its 25th anniversary and wishes to honor Marla Palmer on this occasion with a substantial donation to the NOPBC. Marla has generously given of her time and effort to blind children and families in Utah for more than a decade. She currently serves as our beloved Utah POBC president. Marla has also previously served on the NOPBC board of directors, giving of her time and talents to support families nationwide. With great pleasure the NFB of Utah honors this outstanding mom, who is truly an inspiration to us all.

Sponsors

NOPBC would like to thank the following sponsors, whose generous contributions made this publication and the NOPBC 25th Anniversary Celebration possible.

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NFB of Georgia
NFB of Louisiana
NFB of Ohio

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NFB of Illinois

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Anonymous
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The Cheadle Kids: John, Chaz, Anna
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Dear Families and Friends of Blind Children,

While in a hospital room awaiting news of our infant daughter Serena's eye surgery, my husband Bill Cucco and I were introduced to the NFB. The social worker brought us some literature and books to read, one of which was Doris Willoughby's *A Resource Guide for Parents and Educators of Blind Children.* He warned us that this organization had some pretty good literature but to stay away from them because they were radical and militant. My ears perked right up. I called the NFB as soon as we got home. I loved the NFB from the start. It was the first organization we had encountered that said outright that our blind child had a right to a full, satisfying life.

In the late 1980s Joe Cutter, Serena's O&M instructor, arranged for a small group of parents with blind children to meet. As the families became friends, I suggested that the group become an official NOPBC affiliate. In 1991 Parents of Blind Children-NJ was born. I serve as president and editor of the POBC-NJ newsletter, *In Touch,* which goes out to over 600 families.

The NFB and the NOPBC have become a part of our family. What we seek and gain from the NFB philosophy we also strive to share. I have had the honor of serving on the NOPBC Board since 1991, when I was elected 2nd vice president. In 1998 I was elected 1st vice president and continue to serve in that position today.

Before our children were born, I was a teacher and a writer. I am still a teacher and a writer, spreading the word about the positive approach to the development and education of blind children. My mantra is, "Don't think limits; think possibilities." The three books I have written, *The Bridge to Braille, Because Books Matter*, and *Making It Work* are about possibilities for blind kids. I also work in the Teacher of the Blind/VI Program at the College of NJ and provide training for school districts with blind students.

I feel fortunate that I found the NFB while Serena was still a baby. Because of the Federation Serena has become an independent young woman, determined to make her

mark on the world. The NFB was our backbone as we fought to get Serena what she needed. Now Serena is giving back, mentoring blind youth and serving as Meet the Blind Month chair in the Northern New Jersey Chapter of the NFB.

I am a very lucky person. I have a wonderful family, I have the opportunity to use my time and talents to help others, and I am part of the movement fighting for first class citizenship for blind people.

Carol Castellano
First Vice President, NOPBC

A special thanks to the anniversary planning committee:
Laura Weber
Barbara Pierce
Julie Hunter
Carol Castellano
Carrie Gilmer

Also, a special thank you to Phil Cohen for his design services and flexibility.

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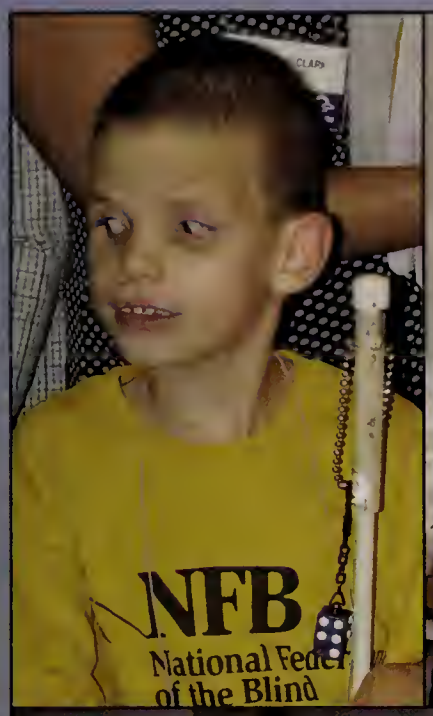
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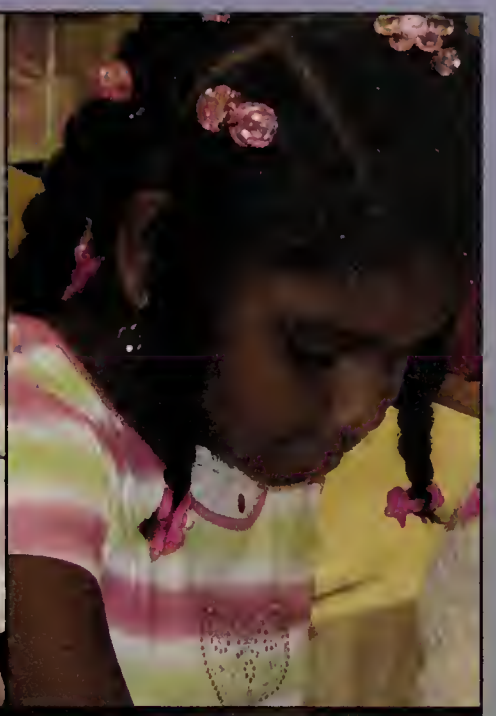

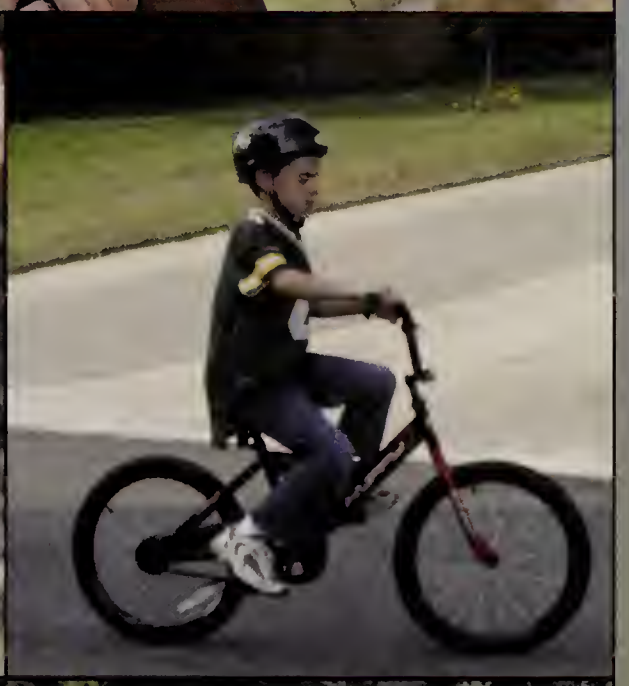

GUIDE

PROGRAM

Hilton Anatole, Dallas, Texas
June 29, 2008
7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Welcome and Recognition of Sponsors
Master of Ceremonies: Carrie Gilmer

Why a Parents' Division?
Barbara Cheadle

Laying the Foundation
Susan Ford

Dan Ryles Memorial Award
Presenter: Carol Castellano

As the Twig is Bent Awards
Presenter: Carrie Gilmer

Keeping the Faith
Kenneth Jernigan—July 2, 1983, Kansas City, Missouri

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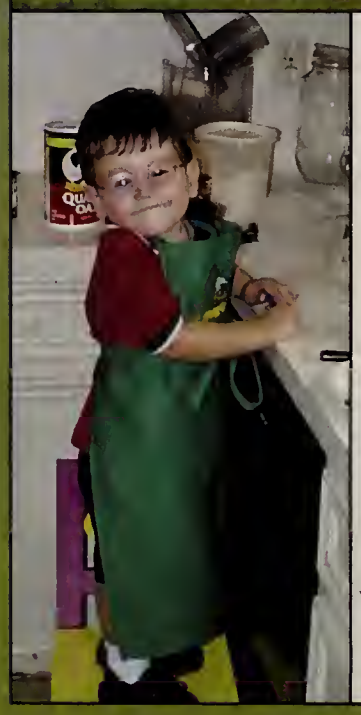

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